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HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
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MCO 1620.3
POS-40
29 Jan 01

MARINE CORPS ORDER 1620.3

From: Commandant of the Marine Corps
To: Distribution List

Subj: MARINE CORPS ABSENTEE AND DESERTER APPREHENSION PROGRAM

Ref: (a) DoD Directive 1325.2
(b) SECNAVINST 1620.7
(c) SECNAVINST 1640.9B
(d) MCO P5800.16A
(e) MCO 1326.6C
(f) MCO P1200.7T
(g) MCO P1070.12J
(h) MCO P1080.40A

Encl: (1) Marine Corps Absentee Collection Center Directory

1. Purpose. To provide Marine Corps philosophy and policy on absenteeism and desertion, consistent with the provisions of references (a) and (b); and identify the roles, mission, organization, and assignment of Marines to the Marine Corps Absentee Collection Center (MCACC).

2. Definitions. Per references (a), (b), (c) and (d), the following definitions apply:

a. Unauthorized Absence Status (Absentee). A Marine who:

(1) is absent from the parent command without authorized leave or orders;

(2) missed movement;

(3) failed to comply with stragglers orders; or

(4) failed to comply with permanent change of station orders.

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b. Deserter Status (Deserter). A Marine who:

(1) is absent from the parent command without authority over 30 days; or

(2) is believed to have gone to or is remaining in a foreign country, and to have applied for or accepted any type of asylum or residency permit from such country, or any governmental agency thereof; or

(3) is an escaped prisoner; or

(4) is a special category absentee (i.e., a person reported absent without leave who has had access to Top Secret information during the last 12 months.

c. Deserter Under Aggravated Circumstances. Those cases of desertion where the individual is an officer, is wanted for selected offenses punishable under the UCMJ, or has access to classified defense information which, if disclosed, could jeopardize the security interests of the United States. Selected offenses are identified within references (a) and (b).

d. Return to Military Control (RMC). Absentees and deserters are returned to military control at the time and date:

(1) they surrender to, are delivered to, or are apprehended by or for military authorities; or

(2) civil authorities holding them for some reason other than at the request of the military inform the military of their availability for return to military control; or

(3) they otherwise come under the control of military personnel.

3. Background. Per references (a) and (b), the Commandant of the Marine Corps has established MCACC to administer the Marine Corps absentee and deserter apprehension program. The mission of the MCACC is to investigate the whereabouts of deserters; establish and maintain liaison with civilian law enforcement agencies to encourage their active participation in absentee and deserter

apprehension efforts; initiate apprehensions; expedite notification procedures; and provide escorts for the purpose of transporting absentees, deserters, and prisoners as directed by the Commandant of the Marine Corps. A Deserter Information Point (DIP) is established as a central focal point to provide for the control, accounting, and dissemination of information concerning Marines administratively classified as absentees and deserters. Central funding for the apprehension program is authorized by statute, 10 U.S.C., Subtitle A, Part II, Chapter 48, Article 956 (deserters, prisoners, members absent without leave, expenses and rewards).

4. Philosophy. A hallmark of the Marine Corps is that fellow Marines are not left behind or abandoned in time of need. This ethos has sustained fighting units over the last two centuries, and is critical in maintaining the unit cohesion required for effective warfighting. Unauthorized absence and desertion constitute serious violations of military discipline by reducing military effectiveness and warfighting capabilities. Absentees and deserters impose additional burdens on commanders and fellow Marines, as well as decreasing unit morale and cohesion. The absence of an active and aggressive absentee and deserter apprehension program is a peacetime luxury that will result in serious consequences in time of sustained conflict. The presence of such a program serves as a deterrent for Marines to remain with their units and fulfill their service obligations.

5. Policy. The Marine Corps will actively and aggressively investigate, locate, and effect the apprehension and return to military control of absentees and deserters, and release such information concerning the absentee and deserter apprehension program in an effort to deter absenteeism and desertion. Execution of this policy is assigned to the MCACC.

6. Organization. The MCACC reports operationally for tasking and technical guidance to the Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC); Plans, Policies, and Operations Department (PP&O); Operations Division (PO); Security and Law Enforcement Branch (POS); Corrections Section (POS-40). The MCACC is composed of a Headquarters element, the Deserter Information Point (DIP), and three Marine Corps Absentee Collection Units (MCACU's): Washington, D.C.; Great Lakes, IL; and San Diego, CA. Enclosure (1) provides an organization directory of the MCACC.

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a. Headquarters element. The Headquarters element is located at Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps (POS-40), Washington, D.C. and is organized as follows:

(1) Officer-in-Charge (OIC). Serves as the focal point for absentee and deserter policy and for administration of the absentee and deserter apprehension program. The OIC is responsible for overall operation and control of the MCACC and will publish standard operating procedures (SOP) to ensure uniform policy and procedures are maintained by unit members per the intent of this Order, references (a) through (d), and other applicable regulations.

(2) Deserter Officer (DESO). Responsible to the OIC for the care, custody, and control of personnel assigned to and transported by the MCACU's. The DESO manages the MCACC per established regulations and is responsible for the training, conduct, and supervision of all members assigned or attached to the MCACC, and performs other duties as the OIC may direct. The DESO coordinates all actions of the MCACU's necessary to accomplish prompt return of absentees and deserters to military control.

(3) Dispatcher. Responsible for coordinating and assigning prisoner and deserter movements within the continental United States (CONUS) and outside the continental United States (OCONUS), per the provisions of references (a) and (d).

(4) Administrative Clerk. Provides administrative support to the MCACC.

b. The Deserter Information Point (DIP). The DIP is a 24-hour control center for deserter operations. The DIP maintains a National Crime Information Center (NCIC) terminal, and has access to the Marine Corps Total Force System (MCTFS) and a variety of law enforcement resources to monitor the absentee and deserter population.

(1) DIP Staff Noncommissioned Officer-in-Charge (DIP SNCOIC). The DIP SNCOIC is responsible to the DESO for the conduct and supervision of DIP operations. The DIP SNCOIC maintains the integrity of the NCIC database; accountability of active DD 553's (Deserter/Absentee Wanted by the Armed Forces); accountability of

deserters in hands of civil authorities (IHCA) or hospitalized; ensures accuracy of daily return to military control (RMC) reports, and other reporting information as required per references (a) and (b); and performs various other duties as required.

(2) NCIC Terminal Operators. Enter and remove desertion warrants from the NCIC, process apprehension requests and surrender sheets, maintain liaison with military and civilian law enforcement agencies, and perform other duties as required.

c. The Marine Corps Absentee Collection Units (MCACU's). MCACU's provide regional deserter caseload coverage of the continental United States in support of the MCACC mission. Each MCACU is composed of the following:

(1) MCACU Staff Noncommissioned Officer-in-Charge (MCACU SNCOIC). The MCACU SNCOIC is appointed in writing by the OIC and is responsible to the DESO for all operational, administrative, and logistical matters, as well as daily supervision of assigned personnel.

(2) Administrative Clerk. Responsible to the MCACU SNCOIC for the preparation of escort travel orders, maintaining records, and performing a variety of other administrative duties as directed.

(3) Escorts. Responsible to the MCACU SNCOIC for all matters pertaining to their duties as a Marine and member of the MCACC. They will be guided in the performance of their duties by the MCACU SNCOIC, the provisions of the MCACC SOP, and all other regulations that may apply.

7. Staffing. MCACC escorts often enjoy a wide degree of latitude in their exercise of initiative, ingenuity, and authority. Their responsibilities are considerable and often far-reaching. The initial selection and subsequent screening of personnel for these duties must be closely monitored to ensure only Marines of the highest caliber and ability are assigned. Accordingly, Marines recommended for MCACC duty will be screened for independent duty by their commanding officer using the independent duty screening/ interview guide and financial worksheet contained in reference (e). Marines who have engaged in conduct that calls into question their maturity, judgement, or reliability should not be recommended for

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assignment to these duties. In addition to the criteria contained in reference (f) for MOS 5831, personnel desiring assignment to the MCACC must also meet the below criteria. Any request for waiver will be submitted via POS-40 with complete justification by the commanding officer. Individuals not meeting the required criteria will not be assigned to the MCACC.

a. Selection criteria

(1) MOS 5831 (Corrections Specialist)

(2) Minimum grade of Corporal.

(3) Minimum of three years experience in MOS 5831.

(4) Suitable character, integrity, reputation, sobriety, discretion, and stability as established by past performance and personnel records.

b. Certification. Only Marines who have successfully completed required training and who have been certified by the OIC, MCACC, may be assigned duties as MCACC escorts. Upon completion of certification training, credentials will be signed by the OIC and issued to the member. No other form of certification or identification issued by other law enforcement or security agencies will be used while performing MCACC duties. The escort travel orders and credentials issued by POS-40 are the only authorized forms of identification as a MCACC escort. Certification will be terminated by POS-40 when Marines no longer meet the criteria established by this Order, or as determined by the OIC.

c. Assignment. Certified MCACC personnel shall not be assigned duties that are not directly related to the MCACC mission without prior approval of POS-40. Marines shall normally be assigned to the MCACC for a three-year tour of duty. Extensions will be considered on a case-by-case basis. All off duty employment will be approved by the OIC, via the SNCOIC of the respective ACU.

8. Action. Commanders will ensure compliance with references (d) through (h), as applicable. Commanders will ensure close coordination with POS-40 in cases which involve deserters under aggravated circumstances.

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9. Reserve Applicability. This Order is applicable to the Marine Corps Reserve.



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